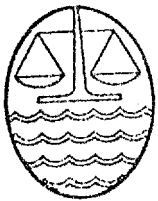




UNITED NATIONS

THIRD CONFERENCE
ON THE LAW OF THE SEADistr.
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COMMUNICATION DATED 18 APRIL 1975 ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE
BY THE OBSERVER OF SURINAM

Mr. President,

As representative of my country which has the position of an observer State, invited in accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 3334 (XXIX), it is a pleasure to recall what you, Mr. President, said in your address at the first meeting of this Conference on Monday, 3 December 1973. You said that the Conference was destined to be one of the most important in history and, in terms of the number of participating States, perhaps the largest ever held. Many other distinguished delegates thereafter emphasized the historic significance of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea in the evolution of the United Nations.

These facts underline why my country, Surinam, is so grateful to be able to attend the conference this time in its own right, now as an Observer and at the end of this year - Deo Volente - as an independent State. My delegation, on behalf of the Surinam People and the Surinam Government, wishes to thank the United Nations Assembly in general and you, Mr. President, for the granting of Observer status to Surinam and other territories in a similar position.

My country, now in transition to independence, is fully aware of the great responsibility and difficult task this Conference has taken upon itself, especially in view of the fact that the forthcoming legal order of the sea will also be profitable for better relations between the highly developed countries on the one hand, and the developing countries on the other hand. Surinam belongs to the latter group of States and shares their day-by-day struggle for economic and social wellbeing. Surinam, Mr. President, as part of Latin America and also part of the Caribbean, is now at last in turn to become an independent State, to be exact at the end of November 1975.

It took a second world war before the 77, most of them former colonies, could gain full independence. The number of States which gained independence since the Second World War is larger but the group of States well-known by this number (77), means much to the people of Surinam.

Surinam is a coastal State on the north coast of South America, a green and very fertile land with a small population and a territory of 160,000 square kilometres. My Government, Mr. President, on behalf of the people of our country, fully subscribes to the views laid down in the often mentioned Declaration of Santo Domingo (Official Records of the General Assembly, twenty-seventh session, Supplement No. 21 and Corrigenda, A/8721 Annex I, Section 2) especially in its purport to establish two zones

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in ocean space: one under the jurisdiction of coastal States, extending not more than 200 nautical miles seawards, and another subject to the authority of the international community. The first mentioned zone embodies the concept of the patrimonial sea, accepted by the majority of States. This vision will suit the world and make true the adagium "suum cuique tribuere".

Surinam also will profit, taking into account that the patrimonial sea will equalize approximately 45 per cent of Surinam's land. Surinam will also profit in regard to living and non-living natural resources, e.g. our fish and as recent explorations indicated, oil and other mineral resources.

As participants in the delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands the delegation from Surinam took part in the various sessions of the Conference without being able to speak specifically for Surinam, but we followed the progress of work with great interest. We noticed your personal efforts and had high esteem for the effort of the distinguished delegates to bring this Conference to a successful end.

But we are not yet at the end of the sessions. Now my delegation is only able to issue this statement as a part of so many other documents of the Conference.

Nevertheless, allow me to mention briefly some problems of my own country, especially where the sea is concerned. Up to this moment, also due to our "autonomous" political status, balancing between independence (home affairs) and dependency (in foreign affairs), Surinam has no guarantee that the problems just mentioned will be solved before the day of independence at the end of November this year.

Inspired by the efforts to secure a successful outcome of this Conference and an international agreement acceptable to the overwhelming majority of the nations of the world, we are strengthened and motivated, to live and act in accordance with the goals and aims of this Conference, notwithstanding little disputes about the delimitation of our historic territorial rights.

We do hope, Mr. President, that the new Law of the Sea will succeed in establishing a workable and compulsory peaceful settlement of disputes in ad hoc international Courts and Courts of Appeal, in a sense as put forward by the delegate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the statement read by Professor Riphagen at the 34th meeting on 9 July 1974 (see Official Records of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, Vol. I, p.141).

Then, Mr. President, every attempt at provocation in these matters can be handled legally.

I am glad to mention the intention of my Government, to give priority to a possible agreement with our distinguished neighbours on the Eastern border of Surinam, that is, with the Republic of France; an agreement, that will settle once and for all boundary disputes along the Marowijne river, in its origin and in the continental shelf. If we succeed in this - hopefully at the end of this year - the French Government and its Department d'Outre Mer (commonly called Guyane Française, better known as Cayenne), together with Surinam, will have achieved a solution to a centuries old delimitation dispute, a solution, which I do hope, will suit all the three parties concerned.

The sea, always in motion, is of all the things made by the hand or the will of the Creator, the largest and an everlasting phenomenon on this, our planet. That is in the view of my delegation also the reason why this important Conference is embarked upon a new convention on the law of the sea, for the benefit of and equilibrium between all nations, big or small, rich or poor, coastal and landlocked.

May the Conference succeed, so that some of the goals of the United Nations may be realized, e.g.: the establishment of conditions (where the sea is concerned) under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained and the reaffirmation of faith in the equal rights of nations, large and small.